

September 26, 2018

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Senate Commerce, Science, and Technology  
Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce, Science, and Technology  
Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
House Transportation and Infrastructure  
Committee  
U.S. House  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
House Transportation and Infrastructure  
Committee  
U.S. House  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Chairman Shuster, and Ranking Member DeFazio,

The undersigned organizations write to express our support for key disability-related provisions included in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R. 302). The particular provisions below send a strong message that the barriers people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, experience in air travel must be addressed.

We are pleased that the FAA Reauthorization includes multiple sections that target concerns of air passengers with disabilities. We believe that these provisions will improve the air travel process for all people with disabilities. The requirement for the creation of an Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights and the establishment of an Advisory Committee on the Air Travel Needs of Passengers with Disabilities will increase awareness of the rights of passengers and the responsibility of air carriers to ensure access to air travel. We also applaud the requirement for a study on in-cabin wheelchair restraint systems and a review of airport accessibility and air carrier training policies as we believe these studies will help to develop new processes and procedures that will change air travel in the future.

In the meantime, we appreciate the increase in civil penalties for harm to a passenger with a disability or his or her mobility aid. We believe that heightening the penalties for failing to meet Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) requirements while at the same time seeking improvements in the travel process will ensure better treatment of passengers with disabilities. The bill's requirements to review and improve ACAA regulations governing ticketing and training of airline employees and contractors who provide assistance to passengers with disabilities, along with the expedited implementation of the reporting requirement on wheelchair and scooter enplanements, will all support an improved passenger experience for people with disabilities.

We are also pleased that H.R. 302 includes language to address the problems people with disabilities encounter when transiting airport security checkpoints. Specifically, we support the requirement for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to revise training requirements for Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) concerning the screening of passengers with disabilities. TSOs will need to receive the training on a recurrent basis. TSA will also be required to develop best practices to address the most frequent complaints and to provide signage at checkpoints describing how a passenger with a disability can receive assistance in screening and how to address any complaints. Lastly, TSA will need to provide a report to Congress regarding the checkpoint experiences of passengers with disabilities, including wait times.

Thank you for ensuring that the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 included these important provisions on the needs of air travelers with disabilities. We look forward to continuing to work with you on oversight of the bill's disability-related air travel requirements and removal of the remaining barriers to air travel for all people with disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Ansley, Associate Executive Director of Government Relations with Paralyzed Veterans of America, at 202-416-7794 or by email at [heathera@pva.org](mailto:heathera@pva.org).

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Council of the Blind  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)  
National Association of the Deaf  
The National Council on Independent Living  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
United Spinal Association